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FM AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1135

INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE

RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

RHMFIUU/CJTF HOA

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS ANTANANARIVO 000242

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E, AF/FO, INR/AA, AND DRL

DEPT FOR DS/IP/AF/E RMEDRANO

PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PREL MOPS KDEM PHUM PINR CN

SUBJECT: ANJOUAN CALM, FRENCH IN HOT WATER IN MORONI

REF: ANTANANARIVO 235

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Anjouan remains calm following Union of the Comoros and African Union deployment to the island with no resistance from Colonel Bacar's forces (REFTEL). Union Vice President Ikililou will lead an interim island government in Anjouan until elections can be held. Rumors continue that armed Bacar loyalists may remain in Anjouan's forested hills, perhaps not yet ready to surrender. The United Nations plans a flash appeal for USD one million for humanitarian support to Anjouan to address food and medical shortages and to quickly restore basic services. The French Embassy in Moroni faced protests March 27 over accepting Bacar in Mayotte. END SUMMARY.

Humanitarian Relief Needed

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¶2. (SBU) Although the best-case scenario has played out so far, prices for food and medical supplies are skyrocketing on Anjouan. The UN will put out a flash appeal for USD one million to meet Anjouanese basic needs. The UN and other international agencies are in the process of setting up in Anjouan to assess and provide relief. UN/OCHA and ICRC have been pre-positioned in Moroni for several weeks and have already made trips to Anjouan. Once in Anjouan, these agencies will also seek to determine what evidence exists of potential human rights violations conducted by Bacar's regime. The Ambassador plans to invoke his disaster relief authority to support relief for Anjouan.

Anjouan Calm

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¶3. (SBU) Union Army for National Development (AND) and Tanzanian contingents arrived in Anjouan with almost no resistance. Reports suggest they have secured all strategic locations and population centers. Continued stability is not guaranteed for at least two reasons. One, there are reports of lack of discipline and abuse by AND forces against "Bacar loyalists." These include public humiliation of Anjouanese believed to be supporters of Bacar. Tanzanian forces in Anjouan, and Sudanese deployed in Moheli and Grande Comore, are reportedly behaving professionally.

¶4. (SBU) The second issue is whether armed Bacar loyalists have melted away into Anjouan's inaccessible forested highlands to "fight another day." Though Bacar himself and an unknown number of his entourage are confirmed to be in Mayotte, many remain unaccounted for in Anjouan. Rumors persist that such a possible "guerilla force" is biding its time to conduct attacks against AND and Union forces to disrupt the organization of island elections. Until the

situation in Anjouan is permissible, the Embassy continues to rely on second-hand reports from the island.

15. (SBU) Union Vice President Ikililou (from Moheli) will serve as interim island president of Anjouan until elections can be organized. The Union wants to hold the election within a month, but the UN believes more time will be needed to do it properly. EmbOffs will serve as elections monitors when the polls are held.

Bacar in Mayotte

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16. (SBU) Press reports indicate Bacar seeks asylum in France. The Union Government wants Bacar turned over to them for prosecution, noting Bacar refused his last chance February 27. Comorans are paranoid about the French on a good day; the surfacing of Bacar in Mayotte is fueling anger and protest against the former colonial power. Unconfirmed rumors (the French Embassy stopped taking our calls) suggest the French may evacuate some or all international personnel as soon as possible.

MARQUARDT